Saturday of 2nd Week of Lent

WORSE

"But it is necessary that we should understand what kind of humility this should be, because Satan, I believe, does great harm. For he hinders those who begin to pray from going onward, by suggesting to them false notions of humility. He makes them think it is pride to have great spiritual desires, to wish to imitate the saints, and to long for martyrdom. He tells us right off, or he makes us think, that the actions of the saints are to be admired, not to be imitated, by us who are sinners." -St. Teresa of Avila

ST TERESA OF AVILA

St. Teresa tells us that Satan often tempts souls to feel that because of their sins, it would be useless or even hypocritical to pray. She provides sound advice to those who are tempted this way: "Let no one who has begun to give himself to prayer be discouraged, and say: If I fall into sin, it will be worse for me if I go on now with the practice of prayer. I think that's true if he gives up prayer, and doesn't correct his evil ways. But if he doesn't give up prayer, let him be assured of this: Prayer will bring him to the haven of light. In this matter the Devil turned his big artillery on me, and I suffered so much because I thought it showed a lack of humility if I persevered in prayer when I was so wicked."

St. Teresa says, "So I gave up praying for at least a year. But doing this was only throwing myself down into hell, nor could it have been otherwise. There was no need for any demons to drag me there. O my God, was there ever blindness so great as this? How well Satan prepares his measures for his purpose, when he pursues us in this way! The traitor knows that he has already lost the soul that perseveres in prayer, and that every fall he can bring about only helps such a soul, by the goodness of God, to make greater progress in His service. No wonder Satan is so eager to stop that soul from praying!" St. Teresa fell into pride by thinking she was worse than the saints and so prayer was worthless because of her sinfulness.

We are very aware that it is prideful to think yourself better than others but we often forget it is the other side of pride to think oneself worse than others. A false humility is to think oneself so sinful that holiness is useless. The reason is because we are focusing on ourselves rather than who God created us to be. True humility is to acknowledge we have failed but even with all our failures we are still Beloved of God. When we think ourselves too bad than we invite in self-condemnation and forget who we are to God. We need to acknowledge that our worth comes not from how we fail or succeed but our relationship with God. How have you thought yourself worse than God would view you?

For your prayer

St. Teresa prayed with Luke 15:1-3, 11-32. Use your imagination as you slowly read Luke 15:1-3, 11-32. Please reflect on how the Father loved the Prodigal Son unconditionally. Reflect on how God loves you unconditionally no matter what you have done in your life.